

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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USDELMC
USNMR SHAPE
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USCINCEUR
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, GR, US
SUBJECT: PUBLIC REATION TO MARINE AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISE PHIBLEX
7A-77, DECA INITIALING AND NATO EXERCISE

1. UNITS OF THE SIXTH FLEET CONDUCTED ANOTHER AMPHIBIOUS
TRAINING EXERCISE, PHIBLEX 7A-77, AT VATIKA IN THE SOUTH-
EASTERN PELOPONNESUS JULY 25-31. (THE LAST SUCH EXERCISE,
PHIBLEX 3A-77, IN THE SAME AREA, TOOK PLACE MARCH 28 - APRIL 2.)
UNITS OF THE GREEK FLEET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT YEARS
PARTICIPATED IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE EXERCISE.

2. THE EXERCISE RECEIVED ONLY MODERATE ATTENTION IN THE
GREEK PRESS, ALTHOUGH IT WAS OPPOSED, OF COURSE, BY THE TWO
COMMUNIST PAPERS, AVGHI AND MOSCOW-ORIENTED RIZOSPASTIS.
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BOTH ATTACKED THE EXERCISE AS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT GREECE
WAS SUBMITTING TO PRESSURES TO RETURN TO FULL PARTICIPA-
TION IN NATO. THERE HAS BEEN A STEADY DECLINE IN PRESS
INTEREST CONCERNING PHIBLEX EXERCISES OVER THE PAST YEAR.
PHIBLEX 7A-77 COINCIDED WITH THE CONTROVERSY IN THE
PRESS OVER INTENDED GREEK PARTICIPATION IN NATO EXERCISE
DISPLAY DETERMINATION THIS FALL AND THE INITIALING OF THE

US-GREEK DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT, WHICH DOMINATED THE NEWS, AND THIS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO A FACTOR IN THE DECREASED ATTENTION TO THE EXERCISE.

3. TWO ANTI-AMERICAN INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN ATHENS DURING THE EXERCISE - A PROTEST MEETING JULY 29 AT THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, ATTENDED BY APPROXIMATELY 4500 INDIVIDUALS, AND THE FIRE BOMBING OR ATTEMPTED FIRE BOMBING LATER THAT EVENING OF SEVEN AUTOMOBILES BELONGING TO US MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO HELLENIKON AIR BASE. ALTHOUGH THE PHIBLEX WAS CONDEMNED DURING THE PROTEST MEETING, THE MAIN POLEMICS WERE RESERVED FOR THE DCA ("OUT WITH THE BASES" WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SLOGANS) AND NATO. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE LINKING THE CAR BOMBINGS TO ANY SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING THE US ALTHOUGH THE INITIALING OF THE DCA AND GREECE'S INTENDED PARTICIPATION IN THE UPCOMING NATO EXERCISE, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE FALL OF THE JUNTA, WERE PROBABLY FACTORS.

4. THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF PROTEST MEETINGS OR INCIDENTS OF ANY KIND IN THE PHIBLEX EXERCISE AREA. HOWEVER, AN OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULED BY THE MARINE LANDING FORCE FOR THE LOCAL POPULATION ON JULY 28 WAS CANCELLED AT THE REQUEST OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES, WHO SAID THEY BELIEVED THE PRESENCE OF AN UNUSUAL NUMBER OF SUMMER VISITORS AND VACATIONING STUDENTS MIGHT LEAD TO INCIDENTS.

MILLS

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